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Contracts Made for New Oceanic Liners.

LARGER THAN THE CHINA

To Be Built by Cramps—John D. Spreckels Places the Order—Refrigerator Plants.

PHILADELPHIA, March 4.—San Francisco's fleet of ocean-going merchant steamers will have three of the largest and best appointed vessels of their class ever seen in the Pacific added to its number before 1900 is very old.

The steamers are to be built for the Oceanic Steamship Company and will replace the Australia, now running between San Francisco and Honolulu, and the Alameda and Mariposa, now on the run between San Francisco and Sydney, N. S. W., via Honolulu, H. I., Apia, Samoa, and Auckland, N. Z.

The new steamers will be 6000 tons gross burden, or nearly a thousand tons bigger than the China of the Pacific Mail Company's fleet. At the present time the China is the largest vessel entering the port of San Francisco, so the dimensions of the new vessels now contracted for can be gathered from the following comparisons:

China, gross tonnage 5,069.82; length 440.4; breadth 48.1; depth 32.8. New steamers, gross tonnage 6,000; length 450; breadth 50; depth 35.

The new vessels will have double bottoms and watertight compartments. They will each have two sets of triple-expansion engines, which will develop 8000 horsepower, and twin screws will drive the vessels at seventeen knots an hour.

The China has magnificent cabin accommodation, but her second-class quarters could easily be improved upon. The new Japanese steamers America Maru, Hongkong Maru and Nippon Maru are way ahead of the China in this respect, but even these new steamers will not be able to compare with the liners now under way for the Oceanic Steamship Company. These will accommodate 175 first class, 150 second class and 100 steerage passengers, and in each section the comfort of travelers will be better looked after than on any vessel ever seen on the Pacific.

The new vessels will, of course, be lighted with electricity throughout. They will also have something that has long been required on steamers in the Australian trade and that is a refrigerating plant. Australia and New Zealand are large exporters of frozen beef and mutton, and shipload after shipload are going from there to Manila to feed the United States soldiers and sailors. There is a demand for the frozen meat in California, and the new steamers will meet this demand by carrying New Zealand mutton to San Francisco. Five cents a pound is a big price to pay for mutton in Australia or New Zealand, while here 12½ cents is considered cheap.

Beside the frozen meat cargo the steamers will carry 2500 tons of general cargo and 2000 tons of coal in their bunkers. They will be built to comply with the navy regulations and when in service can be turned into auxiliary cruisers inside of thirty-six hours.

It was originally the intention of the Oceanic company to have the steamers built at the Union Iron Works in San Francisco. John D. Spreckels, president of the steamship company, and Irving M. Scott of the iron works held a number of conferences, but owing to the number of contracts in hand it was found impossible to build the vessels in the specified time. Mr. Spreckels wants to see the vessels in commission in March or April, 1900, at the latest. Mr. Scott decided that what with the warships and merchant vessels he was now at work on and those the works under contract to build, it would be impossible to accept the building of the three steamers if they had to be completed in a year. Mr. Spreckels accordingly came East last month, and to-night gave out the news that the contract had been let to the Cramps.

WAR CONGRESS ENDS ITS LIFE

What it Did and What it Failed to Do.
No Cable—No New Laws for Hawaii.

WASHINGTON, March 4.—Having inaugurated, waged and successfully concluded a war, the effect of which will be impressed upon American history for all time, the Fifty-fifth Congress has passed.

Called into extraordinary session by what was almost the first official act of President McKinley, it enacted the Dingley law, after three months' recess, it met squarely the Cuban crisis, and after ninety days' work has laid the legislative foundation for the amalgamation of the various elements brought forward as the result of the recent brilliant feats at arms.

To enumerate the accomplishments of this Congress would necessitate the discussion of every phase of national policy. While few lines have been opened the measures passed will lead to the speedy and successful settlement of the new problems which confront America. Its legacy to the Fifty-sixth Congress is one which may well engage the brightest and most patriotic men in the country, and they will find their way well paved by the laws of the now deceased national legislature.

The closing of the Fifty-fifth Congress was most remarkable in the dominance of the House of Representatives. Upon but one question of great moment did the House recede in those final conferences during which the real work of the budgets is done. Committee after committee entered the Senate chamber and reported either disagreement or that the House had refused to give way upon some point upon which the Senate had declared itself with practical unanimity. It was on very simple matters that the House finally gave way to the Senate.

Speaker Reed, for it is certain that even conference committees are dominated by this strong personality, had compelled the Senate to take his view upon the Nicaragua canal, and had, in spite of the President's forcible message, killed the Pacific cable.

Except for these differences between the two bodies the closing of the session was marked by little of moment. The feature, of course, was the unsuccessful filibuster inaugurated by the Middle West Senators in their endeavor to force into the river and harbor bill the provision for irrigation surveys at the head of the Missouri river and for further surveys in the Western States. For seven hours the bill was held up, and at no time was there an agreement in sight until at length the Westerners won their record vote and sent the bill back to conference. They could hope for no more, and although, to the astonishment of every one, yet with grace, did they abandon the fight and the bill was allowed to go through, thus removing all danger of failure of any of the appropriation measures.

Then, after all differences had been adjusted to the greater or less satisfaction of the members interested, came the scenes marking the adjournment. In the House there was more of patriotic fervor than usual.

On the House side, where there is less of dignity than in the upper branch, the members thronged the lobbies and cloak-rooms, singing and telling stories to while away the weary hours of waiting upon the conference.

There have been fewer re-elections of Senators than usual this year, so there were more retirements into private life when Vice-President Hobart declared the session adjourned without day. Immediately was there a thronging of hold-over Senators about the more popular of retiring ones, and Senators White of California, Gray of Delaware, Mitchell of Wisconsin and Allen of Nebraska were surrounded, their hands shaken and every form of manly affection and esteem shown.

The project for the construction of a canal across the isthmus of Nicaragua made progress to the extent that a provision was attached to the river and harbor appropriation, providing for a very complete inquiry into the matter. The addition of a provision to the army appropriation bill forbidding the grant of property franchises in Cuba was also an important legislative act.

Among the important projects which failed to receive favorable attention in the closing days were those providing a Pacific cable, for a Government armor plant, for an anti-scalping law, for an eight-hour law and for a Government for Hawaii.

The navy personnel bill completely reorganizes the navy, and is the consummation of years of earnest effort by the Navy Department. The original army bill was intended to meet the same want for the army supplied to the navy by the personnel bill, but it failed, and the present bill is considered defective in that it is only a temporary measure. It, however, increases the army to 100,000 men and provides for the retention of this number until 1901. The omnibus claims bill provides for the settlement of several hundred claims, some of which are almost a hundred years old. The Alaskan code also meets a long-felt want in supplying a system of laws to this Northwest Territory.

HOW HE WRITES IT.

George Dewey

(Fac-simile of the signature of the famous hero of Manila Bay, Admiral George Dewey, U. S. N. Original autograph in possession of a member of the Advertiser staff.)

TROOPS FOR HONOLULU.

WASHINGTON, March 4.—It has been decided at the War Department not to send the one field officer and four companies of the Twenty-fourth Infantry at Forts Douglas and Russell to Honolulu for the present, as proposed in yesterday's orders. The probability is that some other troops not yet selected will be sent to the island.

STILL THEY FIRE

Filipino Insurgents Continue Use of Rifles.

SHELLED OUT OF POSITIONS

Re-enforcements Stopped—Demands Made by Aguinaldo—A Report From Otis.

MANILA, March 4.—Gen. Wheaton's outposts early this morning detected a large body of rebels attempting to cross the river for the purpose of re-enforcing the enemy at Guadalupe. A gunboat advanced under a heavy fire and poured shot into the jungle on both sides of the river and shelled the enemy's position at Guadalupe effectively, temporarily scattering the rebels. The enemy's loss was heavy.

The rebels in the village of San Jose fired on the United States gunboat Bennington today and the war ship shelled that place and other suburbs of Malabon this afternoon.

MANILA, March 4.—There is serious disaffection in the ranks of the rebel army. Several companies have deserted in a body and many stragglers seek admission to the American lines. They charge their officers with cowardice.

Business has been resumed at Cebu and perfect order prevails. General Otis has been asked to send troops to the islands of Malabon and Finesco. The latter islands contain extensive cattle ranges and they are important to the rebels in that they supply most of their food.

Aguinaldo demands valuable church property in exchange for the surrender of the priests held as prisoners and also wants the rights of the native priests who joined the rebellion guaranteed. It is said that Japan has seized a filibustering steamer bound for Luzon with 20,000 rifles.

10:25 a. m.—The outposts beyond San Pedro Macati were fired upon by the rebels from the walls of the Guadalupe church. A gunboat advanced and cleared away the enemy with Gatlings.

MANILA, March 3.—Secretary of War, Washington: Insurgents have not taken, nor do they hold, a single prisoner of war. They have three soldiers in Malolos, picked up in January, who, without permission, went among them near Cavite and Calocan. I am looking after them and providing money. Have captured over 1500 insurgent soldiers since February 4th and hold the majority as prisoners of war. Detrimental reports, which reach the United States, are manufactured mostly in Hongkong. Troops here in splendid condition. OTIS.

MANILA, March 3.—Maj. Gen. Otis has issued an order establishing a Visayan military district, comprising Panay, Cebu, Negros and other islands hereafter to be occupied, under the supervision of Brig. Gen. Miller.

Col. James F. Smith, of the First California Infantry, commandant and Military Governor of the sub-district of Negros, has been ordered to organize and arm the native civil police of 200 men and put them under military discipline.

REGULARS FOR MANILA.

NEW YORK, March 2.—A special to the Sun from Washington says: Five regiments of infantry and part of a regiment of artillery, all of the regular service, were ordered today to proceed to Manila. The regiments affected are the Sixth, Ninth, Thirteenth, Sixteenth and Twenty-first Infantry and the remaining batteries of the Sixth Artillery on duty in the United States. A part of the Sixth Artillery is now at Manila. This movement is not intended to re-enforce Gen. Otis' present command, but to permit the withdrawal of the Volunteers now serving in the Philippines, whose muster out will be necessary when the peace treaty is promulgated.

All these troops will go from San Francisco, via Honolulu.

Hawaii did not escape the rain storms. They occurred over the whole island, along the coast and back in the mountains. The waters of Waialua stream overflowed. A great quantity of soil was washed down into Hilo bay.

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